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Saxmoundham Urban District Council.

REPORT

ON THE

Health and Sanitary State  
of the District

FOR THE YEAR 1925.





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To the Chairman and Members  
OF THE  
Saxmundham Urban District Council.

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LADIES & GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you a report on the Health and Sanitary State of the District for the year 1925, which is also a Survey Report of the period 1921—1925, inclusive.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

D. W. RYDER RICHARDSON.

### Natural and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (Acres) ... ..	1107
Population (1921 Census) ... ..	1360
(1925, Estimated) ... ..	1342
Number of Inhabited Houses (1921) ...	366
Number of Families or Separate Occupiers (1921) ...	366
Rateable Value ... ..	£6,235 : 11 : 3
Sum represented by a penny rate ...	£25 : 19 : 7½

### Vital Statistics.

	Total.	Male.	Female.
Births. Legitimate	16	9	7
Illegitimate	1	—	1
Birth Rate 12.7.			

Deaths ... ..	16	7	9
Death Rate 11.9.			

The average rates for the past five years are:—

Birth Rate 14.5. Death Rate 11.1.

Of the deaths in 1925, nearly half of the total were over 75 years of age.

Among the causes, three were due to cancer, three to cerebral hæmorrhage, and two to influenza.

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of childbirth, Nil.

Deaths of infants under one year of age ... .. Nil.

The amount of Poor Law Relief during 1925 was £125.

Saxmundham is a small market town, pleasantly situated in a slight valley, about seven miles from the East Coast. It lies on the main, London-Yarmouth, road, and is a junction on the main, Yarmouth, line of the London and North-Eastern Railway.

There are several good shops, banks, and other places of business which cater for the needs of the surrounding country, which is almost entirely agricultural.

A Creamery has recently been opened, which takes milk from a large area.

There is no industry having any definitely deleterious effect on the health of the inhabitants.

There have been no outstanding causes of sickness during the period under review.

### **Health Services in the Area.**

#### **(1) HOSPITALS available :—**

- (i) *Tuberculosis.* Normanston Hospital, Oulton Broad, owned by the County Council.
- (ii) *Infectious Cases.* Ipswich Isolation Hospital, owned by the Ipswich Borough Council, is by special arrangement available.
- (iii) *Other Cases.* Ipswich and East Suffolk Hospital.

#### **(2) AMBULANCE facilities :—**

- (a) *Infectious Cases.* Two County Council Ambulances are available by special arrangement.
- (b) *Non-Infectious and Accident Cases.* Ambulances owned by the St. John's Ambulance Brigade and by the East Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital are available.

#### **(3) PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.**

This consists of a part-time Medical Officer of Health, and of a part-time Sanitary Inspector who is also your Surveyor. Contributions towards their salaries are made by the County Council.

#### **(4) NURSING ARRANGEMENTS.**

A District Nurse, trained in midwifery, attends cases of sickness in the District, except of certain specified diseases. She is supported by the local Nursing Association, which is affiliated to the County Nursing Association. This body receives grants from the County Council.

(5) **LEGISLATION IN FORCE.**

Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890, with Parts ii and iii, P.H. Act, 1890. Adopted 18th January, 1901.

**Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.**

**WATER.**

The town receives an adequate and constant supply of drinking water from the Town Waterworks. The water is delivered from a tube well bored to 230 feet and tubed to 185 feet (19 feet into the chalk) by a pump whose capacity is 4,000 gallons per hour. During the past year this pump has been repaired and a new pump has been installed, guarding against the possibility of a break-down.

The water has been frequently analysed during the past five years and has been found to be of excellent quality apart from its ferrugineous nature, which requires the use of a Candy filter. Its hardness is also a disadvantage when the water is used for domestic purposes.

About 90% of the population is supplied by the Town Waterworks, either directly or by stand-pipes. The remainder obtain their water from 17 private wells, some of which are shallow and provide water of very indifferent quality. A few outlying properties have no source of supply other than pond-water.

During the past five years many unsatisfactory wells have been closed and the town water supply has been substituted.

**RIVERS AND DRAINAGE.**

The so-called river Fromus which runs through the town from North to South is a running stream during wet weather; a series of stagnant pools during dry weather. It receives the bulk of the liquid sewage of the town, with the result that it constitutes a nuisance and a menace to the health of the town during dry weather.

This most serious state of affairs has been a source of increasing anxiety to the Council and to its Medical Officers for many years. In 1912 a Sewage Scheme was planned but could not be carried through owing to lack of means and to the outbreak of the Great War.

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Attention was focussed on the subject by a report on the Sanitation of Saxmundham and on the Pollution of the River Fromus by the County Medical Officer of Health, based on an inspection of the town made in August, 1924.

In this report he recommended the Council seriously to consider the advisability of providing a water-carriage system for the town. He also pointed out that the County Council had power to enforce the provisions of the Rivers Pollution (Prevention) Acts, 1876 & 1893.

The Council therefore decided to approach the Ministry of Health with a view to obtaining a grant in aid of a Sewage Scheme from the Unemployment Grants Committee. The old Sewage Scheme Plans were brought up to date and estimates for the work obtained.

An eloquent appeal for help was, however, refused in December, 1925, and all hopes of carrying through the Scheme had to be abandoned.

The town has therefore to put up with a state of sanitation which might have been tolerable in mediæval times but which is woefully unsuited to modern requirements.

#### CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Water Closets	193
Pail Closets	158
Privy Middens	48

During the past year 13 privies have been converted to water or pail closets. Every effort is being made to induce owners to do away with privy middens and to substitute pail closets.

#### SCAVENGING.

Careful attention is being paid to the prompt removal of house-refuse and owners have been urged to provide movable covered metal bins. These have been substituted for fixed bins in about 60 houses during the past five years.

**Sanitary Inspection of the Area.**

During the year 1925 the Sanitary Inspector visited 150 premises, namely :—

	Number of Premises.	Number of Visits.
Bakehouses and Slaughter-houses	7	56
Dairies and Cowsheds ...	5	15
Dwelling houses ...	120	132
Factories and Workshops ...	18	20
Totals	150	223

Resulting from the above inspections it was found necessary to give informal notices to abate nuisances as under :—

By unstopping drains ...	3 cases
„ removing manure heaps, etc. ...	5 „
„ whitewashing premises ...	2 „
„ converting privies into pail or water closets ...	11 „

In every case the notice has been complied with.  
Two rooms have been disinfected after infectious disease.

**School.**

The Council School received its water supply from a private well until recently. This water was analysed in 1924 and found to be satisfactory. The town water supply is now laid on. The general sanitary condition is satisfactory. The School was closed for 1 day in May, 1922, and for 4 weeks in April, 1924 on account of Scarlet Fever.

**Housing.**

Number of new houses erected during the year.	Total 1
Ditto with State assistance ...	Nil.

(1) UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

Inspection—(i) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects ...	48
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(ii)	Number of dwelling houses inspected and recorded under the Housing Regulations (1910) or the Housing Consolidated Regulations (1925)	48
(iii)	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	Nil.
(iv)	Number of dwelling houses (other than above, section iii) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation. ...	14

(2) REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	14
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(3) ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.

Under various Acts ...	Nil.
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There has been no overcrowding during the past year; there appears to be no grave shortage of houses.

### Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.

Milk of good quality is supplied from dairies and cowsheds in the area and in surrounding districts. The 4 Cowsheds in the area have been frequently inspected and found to be well kept. A cowshed recently erected in the area is excellently planned and shews a great advance over the older types.

No specially designated Milk is sold in the district.

(b) MEAT.

Three slaughter-houses have been frequently inspected and found to be satisfactory. Satisfactory arrangements have been made to enable the Sanitary Inspector to be present at the time of slaughter.

The meat exposed for sale is kept in a cleanly condition and is protected by a glass window in every case.

#### PRIVATE SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

	In 1920.	In January, 1925.	In December, 1925.
Registered	3	3	3
Licensed	—	—	—
	—	—	—
Total	3	3	3
	—	—	—

#### (c) OTHER FOODS.

Four bake-houses have been inspected and found to be satisfactorily kept.

(d) No cases of food-poisoning have been notified.

#### Infectious Diseases.

An epidemic of Scarlet Fever in a mild form occurred among School-children in March, 1924.

An intimation from the Head Teacher giving details of children absent from School, on account of contact with (or suspected of having) Scarlet Fever, enabled me to identify and isolate cases not previously visited.

There has been no other noteworthy outbreak of infectious disease during the past five years.

#### VACCINATION.

From figures supplied by the Vaccination Officer of the District in 1923 it was found that the average of exemptions from vaccination during the preceding five years was about 15% of births. This was found to compare favourably with an adjoining district, where the percentage was 33.6. Re-vaccination is especially advisable for those who are going to districts where Smallpox is prevalent. It is not, however, very often performed.

#### ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA.

One case has been notified during the past five years.

**NON-NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.**

In February, 1925, there was an epidemic of influenza, mostly of a mild type. Two deaths from complications following influenza occurred during the year.

In December 1925, there was an epidemic of jaundice in this area and in the villages immediately surrounding it. The victims were mostly children and young adults; very few cases were severe. The period of incubation appeared to be a long one, up to three or four weeks in many cases. The presence of this epidemic was notified to the County Medical Officer.

Disinfection and disinfection are carried out where required under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector.

**Notifiable Diseases.**

DISEASE.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	2	0	0
Pneumonia	1	0	2

**TUBERCULOSIS.**

The only two cases of tuberculosis notified during 1925 have since been removed from the register as being non-tuberculous and are therefore not included in this return.

There were no deaths from tuberculosis during 1925.

The efficiency of notification appears to be complete.

During the past year a Committee has been formed to assist in the after-care of Tuberculous patients in East Suffolk, and has already done valuable work.

**Maternity and Child Welfare.**

Ante-natal and Infant Welfare Health Visiting are performed by the District Nurse (vide under Nursing, page 3). This work is supervised by the East Suffolk County Nursing Association.







